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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 WARSAW 8477

EXDIS

S/S FOR CARTER LIAISON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PL
SUBJECT: POLAND: WHAT COULD HAPPEN? WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

REF: WARSAW 7867

1. SUMMARY: TO DESCRIBE THE CURRENT SITUATION IN POLAND AS SERIOUS, AS WE HAVE DONE, IS BOTH EASY AND INCONTROVERTIBLE. TO SAY WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE IS OBVIOUSLY MORE DIFFICULT AND SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENTS BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE POLAND WHICH CANNOT BE FORESEEN. WE MUST NEVERTHELESS THINK ABOUT THE POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS EVENTS MIGHT TAKE HERE AND ASK WHAT, IF ANYTHING, THE USG CAN OR SHOULD DO IN AN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THEM IN WAYS FAVORABLE TO OUR INTERESTS -- OR AT LEAST IN WAYS NOT INIMICAL TO OUR INTERESTS.

2. FIRST, THE U.S. INTEREST REMAINS AS STATED IN THE EUROPARA: DIMINISHED DEPENDENTS OF POLAND ON THE USSR, CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., AND A MORE RATIONAL AND HUMANE DOMESTIC REGIME.

3. WE SEE TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS UNFOLDING OVER THE NEXT TWO-TO-THREE YEARS. ONE WE MAY CALL "GRAY," AND THE OTHER "BLACK."

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A. "GRAY" INVOLVES AN UP-AND-DOWN PERFORMANCE, BOTH POLITI-

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CALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, WITH SOME IMPROVEMENTS AND SOME SETBACKS. THE ALGEBRAIC SUM OF SUCH A TREND WOULD BE TO LEAVE THINGS BY AND LARGE THE WAY THEY ARE TODAY, I.E., AN UNCERTAIN LEADERSHIP PITTED AGAINST A SULLEN AND, AT BEST, RESIGNED POPULACE, A SPOTTY ECONOMIC SHOWING, HUGE FOREIGN INDEBTEDNESS, AND A STAND-OFF BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE.

B. "BLACK" IS MORE OMINOUS, INVOLVING OPEN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE REGIME AND THE PEOPLE, AN ECONOMY ON THE SKIDS, POSSIBLE DEFAULT ON WESTERN CREDITS, AND A DRIFT -- OR EVEN LURCH -- BACK TOWARDS A MORE REPRESSIVE, PRE-1965-STYLE, POLICE STATE, WITH OR WITHOUT OVERT SOVIET INTERVENTION.

C. WE SEE NO POSSIBILITY OF A "WHITE" SCENARIO DEVELOPING: A FULL RECOVERY FROM THIS SUMMER'S CRISIS, GIEREK'S RECCAPTURING THE LIMITED POPULARITY HE HAD BEFORE JUNE 24-25, A FURTHER APPRECIABLE RISE IN REAL INCOMES AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING, INCREASED TRADE WITH THE WEST, AND A FURTHER LIBERALIZATION OF COMMUNIST PARTY CONTROL OVER THE POPULATION. IN OTHER WORDS, IF GIEREK'S ORIGINAL STRATEGY TO MOVE POLAND QUICKLY INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF MODERN INDUSTRIAL NATIONS EVER HAD A CHANCE TO WORK, THAT CHANCE NOW SEEMS LOST -- AT LEAST OVER THE NEXT TWO-TO-THREE YEARS. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT PROGRESS WILL NOT BE MADE OR THAT CONDITIONS FOR THE AVERAGE POLE WILL NOT IMPROVE. THEY WILL, BUT AT BEST ONLY BY FITS AND STARTS AND NOT BY THAT GIANT STRIDE FORWARD FORESEEN BY THE REGIME IN THE EARLY 1970'X.

4. IN OUR VIEW, THE U.S. INTEREST LIES IN AVOIDING THE UNFOLDING OF THE "BLACK" SCENARIO. WHAT SCOPE DO WE HAVE FOR THIS? PROBABLY NOT MUCH. BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE CAN DO, AND WE SHOULD GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY.

A. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OUGHT TO MAKE CLEAR IN ITS EARLY DAYS THAT WE VALUE HIGHLY OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH POLAND AND INTEND TO CONTINUE THE POLICIES OF THE PAST TWO PRESIDENTS IN IMPROVING BILATERAL TIES. THIS WILL HAVE TO BE TRANSLATED INTO A CONTINUATION OF THE PATTERN OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS BY THE NEW TEAM IN WASHINGTON, A DEEPENING OF THE RELATIVELY CANDID DAY-TO-DAY DIALOGUE
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WE HAVE DEVELOPED WITH THE POLISH LEADERSHIP IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS, AND THE MAINTENANCE OF OUR EXCHANGE AND OTHER CULTURAL PROGRAMS WITH POLAND ON AT LEAST THEIR PRESENT LEVEL.

B. WHAT WE UNDERTAKE IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE IS IN MANY WAYS EVEN MORE CRITICAL. TO BEGIN WITH, WE HAVE TO DO WHAT WE REASONABLY CAN TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR POLAND TO EXPORT TO THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. THIS WILL REQUIRE SOME

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CHANGES IN LEGISLATION AND TRADE POLICY IN WASHINGTON AND IN A NUMBER OF OTHER WESTERN CAPITALS. ALSO, WHEN THE POLES COME HAT IN HAND -- AS THEY SURELY WILL -- TO ASK FOR OUR HELP IN DEALING WITH THEIR HEAVY DEBT BURDEN, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO RESPOND POSITIVELY. END SUMMARY.

5. WHEN GIEREK CAME TO POWER FOLLOWING ANTI-REGIME DEMONSTRATIONS IN 1970, HE SET ABOUT PULLING POLAND OUT OF THE DRIFT AND STAGNATION IT HAD SLID INTO UNDER GOMULKA DURING THE 60'S. TO DO THIS, HE TURNED TO THE WEST FOR HEAVY INFUSIONS OF CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY, TAKING A LEAF FROM THE SOVIET BOOK. ALSO LIKE THE SOVIETS, BUT UNLIKE SOME OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HE HAD COLLATERAL TO OFFER IN THE FORM OF RAW MATERIALS: HUGE DEPOSITS OF COAL, COPPER, AND SULPHUR. BUT THIS FORM OF COLLATERAL WAS SEEN AS ONLY PART OF WHAT POLAND HAD TO OFFER. GIEREK'S INTENTION WAS TO BORROW AGAINST FUTURE DELIVERIES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS PRODUCED BY THE MODERN INDUSTRIAL PLANTS HE CONTRACTED TO BUILD. TO MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK, HE RIGHTLY RECOGNIZED THAT

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EXDIS

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10. IF THESE TWO SCENARIOUS ARE ACCURATE HYPOTHETICAL DEPICTIONS OF THE TWO MOST LIKELY WAYS POLAND'S PRESNT PRE-

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DICAMENT MIGHT EVOLVE, THE QUESTION ARISES WHAT THE USG SHOULD DO TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAY ALTERNATIVE AS OPPOSED TO THE BLACK. BEFORE TURNING TO THAT QUESTION, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD MAKE EXPLICIT THREE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT U.S.-POLISH RELATIONS.

A. BILATERAL TIES BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND WARSAW ARE NECESSARILY A FUNCTION OF THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. THERE ARE NARROW LIMITS ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH U.S.-POLISH RELATIONS CAN PROSPER IN THE ABSENCE OF REASONABLY GOOD TIES BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW. I ASSUME THAT, WHILE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL PUT ITS OWN STAMP ON U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE USSR, THE ELEMENT OF CONTINUITY WILL PREDOMINATE OVER THAT OF REVISION. IF THE OPPOSITE SHOULD BE THE CASE, IT IS MOST DOUBTFUL THAT WE COULD INFLUENCE THE SITUATION HERE IN A POSITIVE WAY.

B. THE SOVIETS ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE RISKS INVOLVED IN OVERT INTERVENTION TO CONTROL DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND. THEY WILL THEREFORE TOLERATE A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INDEPENDENCE BY WARSAW, AS LONG AS THE AUTHORITIES HERE DO NOT LOSE CONTROL OR TRY TO LEAD POLAND OUT OF ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE USSR.
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C. THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE NOT WITHOUT A MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLAND'S HARD-CURRENCY INDEBTEDNESS. WHEN WESTERN CAPITAL MARKETS WERE SLACK, OUR BANKERS FOUND POLAND AN ATTRACTIVE BORROWER AND ENCOURAGED THE POLES TO PILE UP I.O.U.'S. ON THE OFFICIAL SIDE, THE USG HEARTILY WELCOMED GIEREK'S ECONOMIC TURN TOWARD THE WEST AND FOUND A VARIETY OF WAYS TO PROMOTE IT, AS DID THE FRG, JAPAN, FRANCE, ITALY, BRITAIN, AND THE LOW COUNTRIES.

11. THESE ASSUMPTIONS ESTABLISH THE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH, I BELIEVE, WE SHOULD FASHION OUR POLICY FOR THE NEXT TWO-TO-THREE YEARS. EVEN IF POLAND'S PLIGHT WERE NOT SO PRECARIOUS, THE WARSAW AUTHORITIES WOULD BE NERVOUSLY AWAITING SIGNS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN-POLICY DIRECTIONS. THEY FELT COMFORTABLE WITH THE PAST TWO U.S. PRESIDENTS, AND ARE UNEASY ABOUT SOME OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS AND SOME OF HIS FOREIGN-POLICY ADVISERS. (BEFORE THE ELECTION, I ASKED A POLISH ACADEMICIAN WHO HAS CLOSE TIES TO MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HOW THEY REGARDED TH PROSPECT OF ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI'S ASSUMING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. THE ANSWER WAS THAT THE CC WAS SPLIT BETWEEN THOSE, MOSTLY "BOLSHEVIKS," WHO FEAR HIM AS AN ANTI-COMMUNIST, AND THOSE WHO ARE CONFICENT HE UNDERSTANDS THE PREDICAMENT IN WHICH POLISH PATRIOTS FIND THEMSELVES. MY SOURCE WAS "FOR CARTER AND BRZEZINSKI,"

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BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS AMINORITY POSITION IN THE
POLISH ESTABLISHMENT.)

12. THE FIRST THING THE NEW ADMINISTRATION NEEDS TO CON-
SIDER, THEREFORE, IS THE DESIRABILITY OF EXPRESSING ITS
COMMITMENT TO FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-POLISH RELATIONS
AS PART OF WHAT I ASSUME WILL BE ITS MORE GENERAL COMMITMENT
TO CONTINUING TO SEEK NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS OF EAST-WEST
ISSUES. IF THIS IS THE DIRECTION THE NEW ADMINISTRATION
INTENDS TO TAKE, CONSIDERATION SHOULD NEXT BE GIVEN TO A
SERIES OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. INITIALLY,
AT LEAST, WE DO NOT NEED TO SEND CABINET OFFICERS TO POLAND.
UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES WILL DO VERY
WELL. APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE SOUGHT, HOWEVER,
FOR CABINET-LEVEL MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON. THE MAIN THING IS
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TO CONTINUE THE PATERN OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS WHICH HAS
BEEN DEVELOPED SINCE 1972. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD
ALSO MAKE SURE THAT THE FABRIC OF SCIENTIFIC, ACADEMIC,
AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES WHICH HAS GROWN UP IN RECENT YEARS
IS MAINTAINED AND ADEQUATELY FINANCED. ANY REDUCTION IN THESE
PROGRAMS COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A SLACKENING OF AMERICAN
INTEREST AT THE VERY TIME WARSAW NEEDS REASSURANCE THAT
ITS WESTPOLITIK IS RECIPROCATED.

13. THE ECONOMIC POLICIES THE U.S. AND THE OTHER MAJOR
INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES PURSUE IN THE COMING MONTHS
WILL BE EVEN MORE CRITICAL TO POLAND'S FUTURE. IT IS THE EC,
AFTER ALL, AND NOT THE U.S., WHICH HOLDS THE MAJOR SHARE
OF POLAND'S DEBTS AND HAS BEEN MOST RESTRICTIVE IN KEEPING
OUT POLISH AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN IMPORTS. WE ARE
DISTURBED BY THE DEFENSIVENESS AND PROTECTIONISM WE
DETECT IN A CURRENT OECD DISCUSSION OF EAST-WEST ECONOMIC
RELATIONS. WHILE WE FULL AGREE THAT WESTERN NATIONS SHOULD
BE ALERT TO THE ONE-SIDED ADVANTAGES OF THE PLANNED ECONOMIES
AND SHOULD COORDINATE THEIR POLICIES MORE, WE BELIEVE

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EXDIS

S/S FOR CARTER LIAISON

SUCH COORDINATION SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE A SEARCH FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE THE EASTERNERS' ACCESS TO WESTERN MARKETS. OTHERWISE, WE ARE HEADED TOWARDS A SITUATION REMINISCENT OF THE POST-WORLD WAR I PERIOD, WHEN THE ALLIES WERE INSISTING ON REPARATION PAYMENTS WHILD SIMULTANEOUSLY PREVENTING THE GERMANS FROM EARNING THROUGH EXPORTS THE WHEREWITHAL TO MAKE THOSE PAYMENTS. UNLESS WE REASSESS OUR OWN TRADE POLICIES, WE WILL LACK CREDIBILITY IF WE ATTEMPT TO APPLY PRESSURE TO THE OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES. AS A STARTER, THEREFORE, THE USG SHOULD TAKE A CAREFUL LOOK AT THE PROVISIONS OF THE 1974 TRADE ACT ON MARKET DISRUPTION AS THEY APPLY TO CENTRALLY PLANNED ECONOMIES. I REFERRED IN REF TO THE POLISH FEAR THAT THE PROPOSED NEW U.S. REGULATIONS ON COUNTERVAILING DUTIES WOULD NEGATE THE BENEFITS OF MFN STATUS (SEE, TOO, WARSAW 7820).

14. ALSO ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, WE SHOULD PREPARE FOR A POLISH REQUEST FOR RELIEF OR POSTPONEMENT OF DEBTS FALLING DUE OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS. SINCE NOT MUCH OF THIS DEBT CARRIES A U.S. GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE, THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT WASHINGTON CAN DO TO PROVIDE RELIEF, BUT WE CAN CREATE A FAVORABLE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN WHICH COMMERCIAL BANKERS MAY BE SYMPATHETIC TO ROLL-OVERS, POSTPONEMENTS, AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE, AND, AGAIN, WE CAN ENCOURAGE OUR WESTERN EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE ALLIES TO COOPERATE. THERE
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ARE OTHER POLICIES WE CAN PURSUE IN THE ECONOMIC REALM, SUCH AS THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF JOINT VENTURES AND U.S. INVESTMENT IN POLISH PRIVATE ENTERPRISES AND CONTINUED ABAILABILITY OF EXIM FINANCING, WHICH WOULD ALSO FAVOR THE GRAY SCENARIO.

15. WE SHOULD NOT GIVE THE POLES THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR SUPPORT COMES FREE OF CHARGE. WE SHOULD EMPLOY TOUGH, BUT

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NOT HEAVY-HANDED, BARGAINING IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SEVERAL POSITIVE RESULTS. WE SHOULD INSIST ON LIBERALIZATION OF POLAND'S EMIGRATION PRACTICES, ESPECIALLY AS THEY APPLY TO DIVIDED FAMILIES, AND ON BETTER FULFILLMENT OF THE OTHER BASKET III PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE POLES TO CONTINUE TO TAKE MORE MODERATE POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES (THEY HAVE CAUTIOUSLY BEEN DOING THIS IN THEIR PRESS, ALTHOUGH THEIR VOTES IN INTERNATIONAL BODIES MUST FINALLY BE WITH MOSCOW). WE SHOULD ALSO USE OUR EXPERTISE TO ENCOURAGE THE GOP TO UNDERTAKE STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY. THESE SHOULD PROMOTE ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE WITH THE WEST AND PLURALISM IN THE POLISH ECONOMY. AN INCREASED ROLE FOR PRIVATE AND COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE IN THE SERVICE SECTOR IS A STEP WHICH THE GOP COULD TAKE RELATIVELY QUICKLY. BEYOND THIS, OTHER MEANS SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO ENCOURAGE THE POLES TO LINK THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR ECONOMY WITH THE WORLD MARKET.

16. BEHIND ALL THESE RECOMMENDATIONS LIES ANOTHER ASSUMPTION, NOT LISTED IN PARA 10. THIS IS THAT EVEN A SEVERELY COMPROMISED GIEREK-TYPE LEADERSHIP IN THIS COUNTRY IS MORE IN OUR INTERESTS THAN ANY DISCERNIBLE ALTERNATIVE. THIS SITUATION MAY ALTER, AND GIEREK HIMSELF MAY CHANGE IN WAYS THAT ARE NOT CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ENCOURAGE IN POLAND, I.E., A SOMEWHAT MORE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY, MORE ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE WITH THE WEST, A MORE LIBERAL DOMESTIC REGIME, AND A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON THE USSR. BUT, FOR THE TIME BEING, THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE WE SEE TO POLAND'S MUDDLING THROUGH IS A DOWNWARD SPIRAL TOO RISKY IN ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR US TO VIEW WITH EQUANIMITY, IF THERE IS ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO AVOID IT.
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DAVIES

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